



# HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

## Democratic Caucus

The Honorable John M. Spratt Jr. ■ Ranking Democratic Member

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### Long-Term Continuing Resolution Harms Programs and Policy

Dear Democratic Colleague:

Because Republicans cannot pass their 2003 appropriations bills, some Members are endorsing a long-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government for the next three to six months at the 2002 levels (except for the Defense and Military Construction bills, which may soon go to the President). A long-term CR would most hurt the very programs that the President and congressional Republicans marked for increases in their 2003 budgets.

The following are just some of the programs that would suffer under a long-term CR.

- **Special Education** state grants would receive \$1.0 billion less than the President's request, cutting the federal contribution from 16.2 percent of the total cost for 2002 to 15.7 percent for 2003, far below the "full funding" ceiling of 40 percent.
- **Title I** grants to Local Educational Agencies would receive \$1.0 billion less than under the President's 2003 budget, further harming efforts to raise student achievement under the No Child Left Behind Act.
- **Veterans Hospital and Medical Care** would receive \$1.3 billion less than the President's request.
- **Veterans Education, Training, and Rehabilitation** would receive \$159 million (86 percent) less than the President's request.
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** funding would be \$3.9 billion less than the President's request, failing to keep the bipartisan commitment to double the NIH budget over five years.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** would receive \$289 million less than what the President requested in order to serve all eligible pregnant women, mothers, and children who seek assistance.

- **Section 8 Rental Housing Assistance** would receive \$2.0 billion (12 percent) less than what the President requested to maintain Section 8 assistance for three million currently assisted families and to extend assistance to an additional 34,000 low-income families.
- The **Coast Guard** would receive \$388 million (8 percent) less than the President's request. This would keep the Coast Guard from its expected role in maintaining homeland security.
- **Amtrak** has said it needs \$1.2 billion to keep running. A CR would provide only \$826 million, and even the President's request of \$521 million would be insufficient to keep the rail service solvent.
- The **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** would receive \$61 million (11 percent) below the President's request at a time when terrorist groups reportedly have identified nuclear power plants as potential targets.
- **Nuclear Waste Disposal** would receive \$115 million (55 percent) less than the President's original request, and \$181 million (66 percent) less than his amended request.
- **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**, an integral part of the country's homeland security efforts, would receive \$37 million (5 percent) less than the President's request.

Appropriations Chairman Bill Young said a long-term CR would have "disastrous impacts on the war on terror, homeland security, and other important government responsibilities," according to an October 3 memo to Speaker Hastert. For instance, a CR would limit the Transportation Security Administration to only 28 percent of the President's 2003 request "if emergency funds are excluded from the CR calculation (which is historically the case)," according to Young. His memo also notes that a CR would not fund the President's nearly \$800 million increase for bioterror research or provide the resources "needed to fight corporate fraud and protect investors" at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Chairman Young is right. The consequences of passing a long-term CR are very serious. So far this year, the House has passed 19 tax cut bills. At the same time, House Republicans have managed to bring to the floor only five appropriations bills. The time is long overdue for the House to finish its work by passing all the appropriations bills for 2003. The failure by House Republicans to pass spending bills will hurt key priorities like homeland security and education that Republicans say they support.

Sincerely,

John M. Spratt, Jr.  
Ranking Democratic Member